

# VERMONT MOUNTAIN BIKE ASSOCIATION

## POSITION PAPER: PUBLIC LAND ACCESS

*Updated May 2021*

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VERMONT MOUNTAIN BIKE ASSOC.  
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The Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA) is aware of unsanctioned mountain biking activities on public land. These activities do not represent the intent or interests of VMBA. They are, however, indicative of the passion members of the mountain bike community have for developing new recreational assets for their communities and symptomatic of the challenges often faced in expanding recreational trails on public lands in Vermont. VMBA is committed to developing access to public land through transparent relationships with public land managers grounded in understanding and respect. The Association recognizes that sustainable access will require sensitivity and respect for a diverse range of public land users and that access will vary depending on the scope of public demand and management plans.

Mountain biking in Vermont has a rich history. Trail use, building, and ongoing maintenance began decades in advance of the formation of VMBA. Trail building is very hard work; individuals and groups have invested a great deal of time and energy creating and maintaining currently existing trail networks. In some cases, these trails are illegal. Continuation of illegal use is counter to the goals of VMBA and harms our community as a whole. VMBA is committed to building relationships with public land agencies focused on sanctioned, responsible, and sustainable access.

VMBA is committed to educating our membership. We provide Chapters with information encouraging responsible and legal approaches to gain access to public lands, and encourage them to educate their members in this regard. We encourage public land agencies to provide information that VMBA can share towards this end. VMBA is committed to sharing best practice trail building and maintenance techniques with Chapters, and is eager to facilitate the growth of trusting relationships between Chapter trail builders and public land managers. We also believe that the development of these trust-based relationships and a track record of sanctioned trail development will ultimately lead to more opportunities and fewer challenges for our Chapters to develop trails on public lands.

VMBA serves as the corridor manager for mountain bike trails on Department of Forests Parks and Recreation lands. We desire a similar relationship with the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Until such a relationship has been adopted with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, VMBA requests that riders please respect the current rule prohibiting bicycle riding on Wildlife Management Area lands unless on designated, signed corridors.

Nick Bennette, Executive Director

AND

The VMBA Board of Directors